

To: Helena Community Development and Planning Department  
Attn: Michael McConnell [mmcconnell@helenamt.gov](mailto:mmcconnell@helenamt.gov)

August 19, 2019

Re: Helena Citizens' Conservation Board Recommendations for the draft 2019 Helena Growth Policy Update

We, the Helena Citizen Conservation Board, thank you for the opportunity to respond to the July 2019 Draft Helena Growth Policy Update. We appreciate the thoughtfulness and thoroughness of the document and would like to offer some recommendations.

The Helena Citizens Conservation Board (CCB) was established in 2017 by City Commission Resolution No. 20347 to "advise the City and City Commission regarding actions to support the Paris Agreement including the goal to hold warming to well below 2° C, and to accelerate the transition to a clean energy economy that will benefit Helena's security, prosperity, and health."

The CCB's mission states that the CCB will "support, recommend, report on, and monitor sustainability measures undertaken by the City", as well as "designing, developing, and implementing a public awareness campaign to engage and empower citizens of Helena to take action and respond to the urgent threat of climate change."

At this point in time, Helena is facing an unprecedented challenge shared by communities all around the world: that is, how to plan for, adapt, respond, be resilient and thrive in a rapidly changing climate. The changing climate is already affecting us and the impacts will continue to intensify unless urgent action is taken. This requires an integrative, action-oriented and timely response. The CCB sees the update to our Growth Policy as an opportunity to plan for, adapt, mitigate, and even work to reverse climate change impacts in the Helena area.

The recent Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change report on Land and Climate (IPCC, 2019 <https://www.ipcc.ch/report/srccl/>) stresses the importance of sustainable land management, and how land-use decisions can either make the impacts of climate change more catastrophic or make a community more resilient to the impacts. The report states, "climate change creates additional stresses on land, exacerbating existing risks to livelihoods, biodiversity, human and ecosystem health, infrastructure, and food systems" This Growth Policy reflects many of these systems that will be at greater or less risk, depending on our land use decisions in the coming decades and, as such, climate change should be central to our planning decisions and policies.

For these reasons, the **CCB recommends the 2019 Helena Growth Policy, makes as its central theme and over-arching goal, assuring that Helena grows into a community that is climate adaptive, resilient and thriving.**

As such, we advise the City of Helena to include in its Growth Policy specific targets (or the setting of targets within several months) for the community of Helena to transition to renewable energy sources, decrease green house gas emissions, and decrease the per capita use of water. Currently, the CCB is analyzing data and examining the targets of other cities in our

region that have already taken such steps. We soon will be able to provide more specific suggestions of targets and timelines.

In summary, we recommend the following additions to the July 2019 draft of the Helena Growth Policy Update:

1. Clearly state the overarching goal and central theme to the 2019 Helena Growth Policy is to assure that Helena grows into a community that is climate adaptive, resilient and thriving.
2. State quantifiable and measurable targets with incremental goals for greenhouse gas emission reductions, renewable energy conversion, water usage reductions, and solid waste management improvements.
3. Include language that stresses the importance of sustainable development, adaptability and resiliency to climate change in the summary section of the Growth Policy (such as paragraphs 4-7 in the this letter).
4. Include pertinent goals and objectives from the Climate Change Action Plan (2009) and the 2011 Helena Growth Policy in the goals and objectives sections throughout the 2019 Growth Policy. While we recognize the 2009 Action Plan and the 2011 Growth Policy as an appendices to the 2019 Growth Policy, we advise these goals and objectives be elevated into the plan itself, in addition to the attached appendix. See attached chart for detailed edits.

Thank you for the opportunity to provide input and considering our recommendations and we look forward to the revised Helena Growth Policy Update. Lisa Fairman, CBB member, is the contact person for this project.

Sincerely,

The Helena Citizens Conservation Advisory Board

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